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THE RELATION OF THE SCHOOL AND COLLEGE TO PUBLIC HEALTH.

PUBLIC health is a broad subject, and in this paper I wish to consider only one phase of it, the health of the individual. I wish it understood in the beginning that I speak on this subject as the most ignorant of laymen. I have no knowledge of the subject except that gained by considerable observation extending over years. Furthermore, I have no settled convictions on the subject. I am convinced that more regard should be given to making a healthy race. Whether that involves the further action of school and college is to be proved.

I suggested this topic for the consideration of this association for the express purpose, not of inflicting my own opinions upon it, but in the hope of finding out just what is needed to make for the righteousness of health, and how far, if at all, we pedagogues are responsible for the health of this and future generations.

In this day it needs no argument to show that there should be a better physical development of humanity. Of course, we know that the general average health is better in our generation than in the past. Vital statistics show that we are stronger, larger, and longer-lived than our forefathers. Even the college woman has disappointed many people. She is larger, more rosy, less nervous, than her seminary and boarding-school predecessor. The average college girl is beautiful, not with the beauty of youth simply, but with the beauty of physical vigor. Nevertheless, people of our day are not as strong as they ought to be. No witness of a commencement exercise, in even the best of our schools and colleges, can look at the faculty and students and say: "Here we have symmetrical education; here the whole man is trained; here the fullness of life is realized, and the joy of life and work is understood." Too often we see the dull eye, the stooping shoulders, the shambling gait, or the overbright eye and flush which show the lack of physical stamina. It is too few, after all, among instructors or instructed who attract us by the

evidence of physical as well as mental alertness. The time is gone when we admire, and even envy, the scholar's stoop, but the time seems not to have come when we fully recognize the necessity of the sound body for the sound mind. We still hear physicians, even, say: "Oh, but think of the great work which delicate people have done. The work of the world has been done by feeble folk." True, but is that any reason why it should be done in future by feeble folk? Is that any proof that those delicate people might not have done even better had they possessed strong bodies? Have they not wasted their own and others' strength, which might have been used to better purpose if they could have been unhampered by the weak body?

In these last few years we are having a revival of interest in physical training which is encouraging, but I question if it does not need direction and if it goes far enough. There is some evidence that, while out-of-door sports and athletics, physical culture and gymnasium work, are invaluable, they are not all that is necessary. We want all this; for life today, by virtue of being so largely a city life, is artificial, and we are forced to take the exercise consciously, which used to come in the day's work. But exercise is not enough. We need to see that the body is not only well exercised, but also well fed and well rested, if we wish to secure genuine vitality and real health.

In talking with parents and in looking over the list of my acquaintances I am dismayed at the number of people who seem satisfied with being not ill. The only self-help most people seem willing to undertake seems to be to "go on a diet," which suggests that maybe the secret of good health lies in the kitchen and not in the office of the physician, the gymnasium, or our province at all. That is what we ought to determine before many years, it would appear.

In these days of rapid transit, when, as someone has said, we need to pray, not "Give us this day our daily bread," but "our daily agility;" in these days when we are demanding the greatest efficiency of machinery, of animals, and of day laborers, we scarcely can demand less than the greatest efficiency for our educated classes. How far are the schools and colleges responsible

for such efficiency? President Eliot has arraigned the public schools for their partial failure. This failure may be, in part, due to the fact that the schools have not attended properly to the whole man. May it not be that, in failing to make for the righteousness of health, we educators have failed in half our work? Are the schools failing to do their part in producing a finer, saner population? This is a question which such an organization as this should consider, not for one day only, but for many. If we are responsible in any part for the physical well-being of the community, we ought to decide, as soon as may be, how far we are responsible, and how we can best meet that responsibility. As teachers we ought to have some ideas as to the physical training of our students. If the schools are to do this work (and they have assumed a part of it), certainly we ought to consider our relation to it as a whole, and not leave the subject to the teachers of physical training alone, any more than we leave the teaching of mathematics or chemistry or history to the specialists alone. We consult the specialists in the mental training, but we also look at each branch in its relation to all the others. Just so, I think, we should do with physical education. If we admit it at all to the schools, we should consider its relation to the whole educational system.

Before this paper was thought of a committee, of which I happened to be chairman, had prepared a series of questions to be sent to colleges, universities, and preparatory schools, asking as to the advisability and practicability of making physical requirements for college entrance and graduation, and as to the attention paid to physical education in both college and school. From the replies it is evident that most educators think some attention should be given to physical education. Many answers indicate a belief that much more attention should be given to this side of education, but some add, in an "end-it-all" way, that it is impossible to do so, as few schools are equipped for good work. We have not considered lack of equipment any reason for giving up the teaching of history or mathematics, or any other study; we have set to work to get the equipment. If this sort of study is necessary, and is ours to give, we must set to

work to give it. Some of the replies indicate the feeling that this is a subject outside the realm of school, by stating that it does not seem wise in this matter to stand *in loco parentis*. Or the statement is made that this is a matter which should be left to the family physician. Perhaps this is true, but it is the opinion of so few that I have been increasingly glad this association was to consider the problem.

The question of the need of the school to stand in the place of the parent has been raised in regard to every movement in education. Once it was questioned whether education of any sort was not best given by the home. Manual training met the same question: "Ought not the home to give this instruction?" Both these questions have been answered in the negative. That is no proof that this question may be so answered; neither is it a proof that it is rightly answered in that way. I agree that the schools do not leave enough for the parents in this day; or, should we put it that the parents leave too much to the school? But that again is no proof that the schools should not take up this branch of work.

If parents are better able, or more willing, to train the children's bodies than their minds; or if children are more capable of training themselves; or if they need less training physically—which is to say—if nature does more for the body than the brain—then we may safely leave this side of education to the home. But there is little promise in this outlook. Neither nature nor the home alone seems equal to the difficulties of modern life. The long walk to school in the bright sunshine and fresh air is no longer possible for the majority of children. The close contact with the soil which country roads afford, the healthy exercise at woodpile and in the big airy kitchen, are not possible in this day of flats and tenements. Nature cannot do her part to vivify and heal and it is correspondingly difficult for parents to do theirs. It is almost impossible for the most intelligent and sensible of mothers to train her children properly in the present state of public sentiment.

This is especially hard for mothers of girls. Educational demands have increased without diminishing social demands.

Time was when a girl was trained only for society, the home; when at school all her studies went to fit her entirely for society. We still demand more socially from women and girls than from men and boys, and as much, if not more, in the line of study. Most girls have some music, if not painting, outside of school. They must receive and make calls as well as attend parties. In the present state of public sentiment a mother does not feel justified in refusing to give her daughters all these opportunities. The result is lack of time for sleep, and, since her exercise is different from that of a boy, she eats less than a boy. In these days, even though it is fashionable to have brown face and hands, big feet, and to play basket-ball, we still find girls coming up to college anæmic, underfed, and under-slept. We still find many girls and boys who have a hot meal only on Saturdays and Sundays during the school year, because the family dines at noon before school is out. When I find a girl worn out on entering college, because "she had to sit up late to study every night last winter" the mother pathetically saying—it being easy to see the girl sat up, because she went to one or more parties a week, or was not well enough fed to be able to use her mind properly; when colleges for women have to require seniors to be out of doors a certain number of hours a week—when I see all this obvious disregard for the ordinary laws of health, then, I fear, something radical must be done to create a proper regard for the body.

In this part of the country at least we have given up the contention that mothers can teach all that needs to be known about cooking. There are reasons for thinking that those who cannot teach cooking may not know what ought to be cooked. Do not mistake me; I would not turn our schools into boarding houses; but can we not in some way through the school more directly help the mothers to attend to the diet and general care of their children? Ought we not to do so?

In some way or other we must educate public sentiment to a true valuation of the essentials of life. It is already conceded in some cities that the care of the eyes and ears of children cannot be safely left to the parents or to the family physician;

unless, indeed, there be no family physician, or there being one, he is the kind who cures ills, but thinks it not his office to maintain vigor. Is there any less need to care for the lungs and liver? Or are gymnasium practice and athletics doing the work for those organs? This is what we ought to decide for ourselves as professional educators. Our schools have, to an extent, committed themselves to the practice of attending to the bodies of the youth. Have we gone too far or not far enough? If the school is responsible at all for the bodies of its pupils, is it as responsible for them as for the minds of its pupils? If so, how? And if the school is involved, does that involve the college, or is the college involved regardless of the school?

We all know that most of the reforms in education have come from the top, from the higher rather than the lower schools. If the work in physical education does belong to the schools, it may be that they would sooner get at their work if they have the help and inspiration of the colleges. It may be that the college owes it to the community to take its stand for the beauty of wholeness—for wholeness of body as of mind.

If we grant that the demand of the colleges has been effective in raising the standard of education throughout the country, there is no reason to suppose that their demand for higher physical development would be less effective. There is reason to suppose that, if the colleges stood for the largest measure of physical perfection, the standard of living would be raised to a higher plane.

There is no doubt that a large part of the physical ill-health of a community, of the lack of physical stamina, is the result of an improper valuation of health. Is there any way in which a youth could better be taught the value of good health than by finding lack of it a bar to entrance to college? Mothers would not be so ready to leave the question of food to an ignorant helper, or the regulation of hours of sleep to their children themselves, if they realized that even entrance to college could be secured only by those in good health. We are pretty well agreed that some sort of mental requirement is necessary before admitting a student to college. May it not be just as advisable and

just as expedient to make a physical test as a mental test of ability to do college work?

There are, I take it, three chief reasons for our present college-entrance requirements: (1) to save candidate and college the time of the "weeding-out process;" (2) to insure the right type of college work; (3) to secure the uplift of education in general. Of the last I have already spoken. I wish now to consider whether time would not be saved in this "weeding-out process" if we had a physical requirement as well. I have not known so much about boys in the last few years, but I do know that a considerable number of girls come to college tired out. A girl of that sort does one of several things. She either goes home after a term, or mayhap less, ill, when, if she had not tried to do work for which she was not physically fit, she might have escaped the illness; or she stays in college, drops a part of her work which she worries over for the next few years; or she drags through the year acquiring habits of laziness which stay by her the rest of her college life; or she gets the habit of working for credits and credits alone, with no joy in her work; or she settles into a dig, losing the fun and friendship which make half the value of a college course. In either case she loses the zest of life which should be the birthright of every educated person at least.

Failure of the colleges to send out better-equipped citizens may be, in part, due to the fact that we allow college work to sap the already weakened vitality of so many students. Are not the colleges helping to rob some students of the possession of true culture, not by undue demands upon their time and minds, but by presupposing a sound body? I hold that the present requirements of freshmen and for freshmen are not beyond the ability of the average boy or girl who has a properly trained mind and body. There is some reason to believe the present complaint is the result, not of the undue demands of colleges, but of unnecessary lack of physical strength of the candidates. At least the colleges have no difficulty in getting many students on the present requirement who are healthy. The comparatively small number of unhealthy applicants only emphasizes the use-

lessness of such lack of health. The very fact that the majority of students, even those who enter in poor health, improve even in the first year shows how easily it may be secured. If by demanding that health for entrance we could economize time for student and college alike, and at the same time fulfil the still more important office of teaching the general public the value of health, the college would discharge one more service to society.

The second reason for college entrance requirements is to maintain the type of college work, to keep up the standard of work. Not infrequently, I fancy, every college turns away would-be students who are undoubtedly fitted to benefit in very large measure by the college course—turns away those whose whole lives would be broadened and lightened by four years in college—because they are not prepared to take the course according to the accepted standard of preparation. In such cases it is hard, may be unfair, for this individual, but it is best for the college community, not because this one would keep the class back—she would not—but because it is better in the long run to sacrifice the individual for the sake of keeping up the standard, the college being for society, not for the individual.

Why should it seem more unkind to exclude the physically unprepared than the mentally unprepared? I am not saying what degree of weakness should be barred. I am by no means advocating the imitation of the West Point or Annapolis requirements; those are special schools. I wish only to raise the question whether it would be fair to make a physical requirement. Personally I doubt if the requirement of a reasonable standard of health would be more difficult for students to attain than a mental requirement. I doubt if a reasonable standard of health would keep proportionately more people out of college (after a year or two) than are now kept out by our mental requirements.

It does not seem to me harder to refuse those who are physically unfit than those who are mentally unfit, albeit it is harder to decide in the one case than in the other. But are we to leave the matter simply because the problem is difficult? The question ought to come to us in this way: Is it as harmful to students to live and work side by side with those who are physi-

cally weak as to live and work side by side with those who are mentally weak? Here I mean not weak-minded, but with less development, as I mean with less physical development. Is the gait of a class shortened by the presence of physical weakness, as it is by the presence of mental weakness? Is the buoyancy of the class lessened? Is the moral tone lowered by the one defect more than by the other? If so, we are not only being uneconomic in putting our time and money into one who cannot use it well, but we are immoral in thus preventing the majority from getting all their due.

But regardless of the individual or of college standards, is it good economy for the college as a college to disregard the physical condition of its students so largely? From a purely commercial standpoint, has a college a right to expend its patrimony in educating those who are physically unfit—those, I mean, not in a physical condition to make the most of their opportunities for education?

Our colleges and universities are either endowed by private munificence or supported by tax on the people of a state. No college student begins to pay the expense of his education. In either case the faculty is, as much as the trustees, responsible for the expenditure of the money; at any rate, where the faculty determines the requirements for admission, as most faculties do. That is, the faculty of a college practically invests thousands of dollars of other people's money every year. Are we not, then, just as much under obligation to see that money wisely invested as if we were devoting it to industry? Are we as careful to see that money invested in a man or woman is as carefully invested as the manager of a factory is to see that the money he has is wisely invested in a machine? Of course, we cannot run a college on the basis of a factory, but that does not mean that we are not to be as conscientious in the expenditure as we would be if we were running a factory. The principle is the same whether the return is in watches or men. We do not spend a thousand dollars to make a hundred-dollar watch, and there is no reason why we should spend a thousand dollars to make a hundred-dollar man. That is, however, just what we are accused of doing,

mayhap truly. It is, of course, easier to tell whether a watch will turn out a dollar or a hundred-dollar watch than to tell whether a man will turn out a thousand-dollar man, and the watch has no claim on us to be tried. Our testing of a man in the making cannot be so accurate as testing the gold for a watch; still that does not absolve us from the necessity of making as perfect tests as possible. Honesty in the expenditure of other people's money does demand that we, so far as in us lies, apply all the possible tests to the man, as the assayer applies all the tests in selecting the gold for a watch. I am not saying what those tests should be for us, but simply asking whether we realize all of our responsibilities.

One other commercial view should be considered. Our stores and factories are demanding well-proportioned, healthy workers. It would seem that our schools could demand no less. Factories and railroads, I understand, are refusing to employ men whose fingers show the yellow stain of the habitual cigarette smoker, deeming such too enfeebled in mind and body to be of service; yet our colleges are taking no account of yellow fingers, and make little attempt to teach the morality or economy of vigorous health. Our æsthetic sense has grown until we demand even in our maid servants and men servants a degree of comeliness which good health alone can give. Ought the schools and colleges to demand less? Can they demand less if they are to supply the world with its thinkers and workers?

These are the two questions I would propose for the consideration of this association: (1) Does it rest with the schools to educate the body as well as the mind? (2) Does the present system of inspection and gymnasium work adopted by some schools constitute physical education?

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